Craftsman Screwdriver Evolution 1950-2017
Part VI: Magnetic & Multi Bit Screwdrivers
1948-2017

Codes

Circle I: Parker- 1948-1953
CP: Magna?- 1969-1970
PD: unknown- 1970-1971
WF and Variants: 1970-2017
GK: McCalla Company/ Ovation Group- 2000s

Magnetic Bit Screwdrivers

Standard Hollow Handle: 1969-20??

These were introduced in 1969 as model number 41466 with a 4 inch steel shank and they were coded CP. Judging by the shape of the shank, I would say that they were made by Magna, but it's only a guess.

In 1971 it was replaced by model number 41467, which had an aluminum shank, however, the catalog images don't show that change until 1972. They were mostly coded WF, but some of the early ones with pointed A's were coded PD, the maker of which is unknown. They were all sold with a 4 bit set and were discontinued sometime in the 2000s.

First version with a close up of the CP code. (Not my photo, from Worthpoint.)

An example of the modern version. (Not my photo, from Worthpoint.)

PD coded variant. (Not my photo, from Worthpoint.)

Torx Set: 1980- late 1980s; 2000s

In 1980 the Torx version was introduced. It was basically the same, but instead of an aluminum shank it had a stainless steel one, and also it had a black thumb rest instead of a blue one. It had 4 bits: T15, T20, T25, & T30. It was discontinued between 1986 and 1989. Later in the 2002-03 catalog they made a reappearance. They were made by WF.

An example from Worthpoint.

Red Striped Handles: late 1980s-2000s

These were introduced sometime in the late 1980s, and they were only sold with the large bit sets. They followed the same color scheme as the regular slotted screwdrivers. The earlier version from the 1980s and 1990s had a hollow handle with a hex shaft, and the later version had a solid handle. The sets included a small, short solid handle. There was also a hollow handle spinner cap version as well. These are uncoded and were made by Magna.

An example of the hollow handle version from the 1989 Christmas catalog.

The solid handle and spinner cap versions from the 2002-03 catalog.

Red and Black Handles: 2000s

I don't have much information on these other than the NOS ones have packaging that dates from around the 2000s. The patents on the back of the packaging are about the 32 bit holder and are assigned to Anderson Family LLC. I don't know who made the bits or the drivers. The standard set had a handle that was red with a black spinner cap, and the tamper proof set had a black handle with a red spinner cap. The bits on the tamper proof set were made in either Taiwan or the US, according to the packaging.

Examples of both types. (Not my photo, from eBay.)

Driver Light: 2000s

This screwdriver was made by the McCalla Company, later a division of the Ovation Group. Both its patent and trademark were applied for in 1998 and granted in 2000, and the trademark was canceled in 2005. It incorporated a flashlight into the handle powered by AAA batteries. They were coded GK.

An example from Worthpoint.

Black Handle: late 1990s-c.2011

These appeared in the late 1990s and were more commonly found in sets rather than individually, but they were offered that way starting in the early 2000s. They had an aluminum shaft and a black handle similar in shape to the regular Craftsman screwdrivers, minus the knob on top. They were discontinued sometime around 2011. I don't know who made these.

An example from my own collection.

Saw Driver: 2006-20??

This could be a saw or a screwdriver, hence the name "Saw Driver." They were related to the Grip Drivers, but these didn't ratchet. They were made in Germany by Schroeder and imported by WF. The bits were made in Taiwan and the blades were made in China. The trademark was first used in 2006 and they were discontinued by 2011.

A NOS example from Worthpoint.

Multi Bit Screwdrivers

Add a Bit: 1943-1956

These were introduced in 1943, and they were made by Parker. There were 2 versions, the first used round bits that wedged into the shaft. The patent for the first version was filed for in 1940, and granted in 1942 and assigned to Stanley, who later licensed it to Parker. The second variant was introduced in 1954, and it used a chuck that would thread onto the bit, and the bits were flat with a pressed ridge in them along with narrow strips of threading. The patent for the second variant was filed for in 1952 and granted in 1954, and assigned to Parker. The first variant was sold with 3 bits: P1, P2, and 5/16 slotted. The second variant was sold with either 5 or 11 bit sets. The 5 bit: P1, P2, 3/16, ¼, and 5/16 slotted. The 11 bit; same bits as the previous one plus: ¼ socket adapter, ¼, 5/16, ⅜, 7/16, and ½ sockets. The first variant was coded Circle I, the second variant was uncoded.

Entry for the first version in the 1952 catalog.

Entries for the second variant from the 1954 catalog.

4 in 1: 1972-1979; 1990s- late 2000s

These were introduced in 1972, and 3 versions were produced. The first was made by Vaco (model number 41502), and was really a 2 in 1 with another set of blades. It was discontinued in 1976, and replaced by a true 4 in 1 made presumably by WF (model number 41504). From 1978-79 a Robertson version (model number 41505) was made as well. It was discontinued in 1979, and the 4 in 1s made an appropriately 10 year hiatus. In the 1990s it was reintroduced with a new model number: 41161. It continued until the late 2000s when it was redesigned to be a 6 in 1.

An example of a Vaco style driver. (Not my photo, from Worthpoint.)

Entries for both the Robertson and Phillips versions of the second variant from the 1978-79 catalog.

Entry for the third variant from the 2002-03 catalog.

6 in 1: late 2000s-2017

Sometime in the late 2000s the 4 in 1 was redesigned to be a 6 in 1 by having a shaft that had both ¼ and 5/16 openings. The model number was kept the same. However these weren't fully made in the USA, with the shaft and bits made in Taiwan.

An example date coded 2014. (Not my photo, from Worthpoint.)

10 in 1 and 5 in 1: c.2000

This screwdriver was patented by Anderson Family LLC, and it or at least the handle, was made by Pratt-Read. The back of the packaging has a date of 2000, and the 1998-99 or 2002-03 catalogs don't show it, so it was probably sold between 2000-02.

An example of a 10 in 1 from Worthpoint.

An example of a 5 in 1 from Worthpoint.

Power Grip: 2000s

This screwdriver was made by Fiskars and was patented in 1984, and during the 2000s it was sold under the Craftsman name. It had a large triangular handle with a rubber grip and it stored 4 bits in the front of the handle.It was sold in 11 in 1, which had double ended bits, and 5 in 1 which had single ended bits.

Entry from the 2002-03 catalog.

All in One: 1999- c.2007

This screwdriver had all of the blades permanently stored in the handle, and you would rotate the selector to the desired bit and you would pull it out and then lock it in place in the center. The trademark was first used in 1999 and canceled in 2007. Two versions were sold: a standard version which had 3 slotted and 3 Phillips blades, and another version that was ball end hex.

Entry from the 2002-03 catalog.

Ball end hex version.

Convertible T Handle: late 2000s-2017

These were made by WF starting in the late 2000s, but again, like the 6 in 1s, the shaft and bits were made in Taiwan. The handle had two features: first it was hollow to store the bits, and secondly you could detach the shaft and stick it in the side of the handle to a T for more torque. The two bits were ball detent locking and were double sided.

Image from an unknown catalog.

An example of packaging that clearly shows the two COOs. (Not my photo, from eBay.)

Sources

Worthpoint
EBay
Craftsman and Sears catalogs.
Google patents
USPTO